



Passionate Landscape: The Painting Journeys of Buffalo Kaplinski

Harmon S. Graves

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Buffalo Kaplinski's roots were firmly established in Taos, New Mexico in the late 1960s. The same illustrious blue sky joining the earth tones of New Mexico's sweeping landscape that proved irresistible to the Taos Society of Artists in the early 1900s tugged at Kaplinski. He abandoned a stagnant illustrator's career path in Chicago and his palette of subdued urban colors, and burst into this still-sleepy community of struggling artists, rebozo-clad old Spanish women, Pueblo Indians, and tourists mostly passing through on their way to Santa Fe. He shared a Bohemian life style and painting forays deeper into the American Southwest with such other now well-recognized artists as Ned Jacob, George Carlson, and Len Chmiel. Although serious in their approach to art, comical episodes naturally erupted in their life and travels which are shared with the reader.

Kaplinski's sense of place never allowed him to languish and be content to paint eloquent pictures of the Southwest which have always been sought after by his collectors. He discovered that the challenges of pristine scenes and architectural complexes made by man or found in nature throughout the world fostered new compositions, a constantly changing palette, and provided his collectors a cornucopia of images of intriguing places with an abundance of color. Such places and their people are seen through the eyes of the artist, whose sense of humor and often unconventional modes of travel lead inevitably to the unexpected.

If one were to ask what Kaplinski has added to American art, the answer is apparent from the scope of his work. He has taken his considerable skill to places that many have ignored and may discover too late. Our good fortune is what he was provided for us to enjoy today.



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